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NRO REVIEW COMPLETED

27 September 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR : Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : Operational and Technical Planning for U-2
Reconnaissance of Cuba in the Light of Soviet Build Up

1. While the introduction of new and sophisticated military hardware by the Soviets in Cuba has introduced a new dimension in U-2 reconnaissance of that Island, it does not necessarily spell the downfall of continued and effective surveillance with this weapons system in our view.

2. There are two major areas within which certain changes are indicated, and in both a major effort is currently underway; these areas are Operational Doctrine and Improved Technical Defenses. Actions underway are as follows:

a. Operational Doctrine: Before the introduction of SAM sites and MIG-21's, U-2 missions were traditionally mounted from Laughlin Air Force Base, Del Rio, Texas, and designed to cover as much of the Island of Cuba in one flight as was possible, subject only to fuel limitations and altitudes sufficient to avoid condensation trails. Entry and exit from Cuba were almost always within a fairly well-defined region west of Havana in the Pinar Del Rio Province. At present operational doctrine has been revised to maximize altitude, and at the same time minimize time over denied territory. Instead of extended cruise missions, we are now going to what is essentially a short ferret system, at the same time varying our entry and exit points so that no two missions follow the same pattern. Although Del Rio, Texas, is still the primary staging point, additional altitude is gained by lightened fuel loads compensated for by post-strike air refueling in special areas set up only this month by FAA at our request off the coast of Florida.

In addition, arrangements have been completed with the air sea rescue service, USAF, to provide on-station support of SA-16

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aircraft, their position keyed to the mission flight plan so as to be maximally effective. Agency communications are in being between Headquarters in Langley and ARS Headquarters in Orlando, Florida, from which point a coordinated effort is mounted.

As a further means of reducing the political hazard of a possible off-shore ditching of a U-2 for any reason, arrangements have been made through JCS and CINCLANT to provide an airborne fighter support capability from NOB Key West and the Naval Base at Guantanamo. This support is purely defensive and would be activated only in the event of a water landing where a rescue attempt was being made by the SA-16 aircraft. Until that moment fighters are no closer than fifteen minutes by air from the track of the U-2 aircraft. Their instructions are to prevent interference with the rescue attempt or to provide cover for the downed plane until rescue aircraft arrive. The JCS Rules of Engagement for Cuba are in effect, subject only to the overriding requirement to fulfill the mission of rescue.

Study is currently underway leading to the possibility of employing bases other than Del Rio for staging in order to further vary U-2 mission profiles and to provide even greater altitude capabilities.

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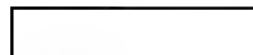
b. Improved Technical Defenses: In order to counter the new threat from both the ground and air environments in Cuba, the following technical improvements are in work or completed.

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3. While none of the above measures can singly guarantee a wholly immune U-2 reconnaissance program, taken collectively it is our conviction that they can indeed prolong the useful life of the U-2 in the new Cuban military environments. Other studies will be undertaken as time proceeds to further ensure maximum mission safety. One thing is evident; shorter missions will have to be flown which will require more high-level approvals.

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COLONEL, USAF
Assistant Director
(Special Activities)

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